

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00617 221552Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 MCT-01 DHA-02 AID-05 PC-05

A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 CU-04 /117 W

-----230405Z 070564 /20

R 221500Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5993

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

US MISSION USUN NEW YORK 1317

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0617

E.O.11652:N/A

TAGS/ SF, WA, UN

SUB: NAMIBIA: SWAPO ABDUCTION OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

REF: CAPE TOWN 0612

1. FOUR ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES DESCRIBED IN SOME
DETAIL THE ABDUCTION OF OVER 100 SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM THE
ENAMULENGE MISSION DURING INTERVIEWS WITH PRESSMEN APRIL 21.
THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN NOT ACCOUNTED FOR IS NOW THOUGHT
TO BE 121. THE FOUR MISSIONARIES WERE TAKEN ALONG WITH THE GROUP
OF ABOUT 30 GUERILLAS, WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES TO THE
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ABOUT 30 GUERILLAS, WHO IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES TO THE
MISSIONARIES AS SWAPO MEN. THE MISSIONARIES LATER EXCAPED,
ONE WHEN HE WAS ALLOWED TO DROP BEHIND A GROUP OF CHILDREN
BEING MARCHED ACROSS THE ANGOLA BORDER, AND THE OTHER
THREE WHEN SOUTH AFRICAN SECURITY FORCES OPENED FIRE,
CAUSING THEI ABDUCTORS TO FLEE WHILE LEAVING THE
MISSIONARIES IN THE VEHICLE UNHARMED. CATHLOIC

AUTHORITIES IN WINDHOEK SAID STAFF MEMBERS ARE PRESENTLY IN OVAMBOLAND MAKING FURTHER INQUIRIES, BUT FOR THE MOMENT THERE WAS NOTHING TO ADD TO PRESS ACCOUNTS.

2. CAPE TOWN PRESS HEADLINED THE INCIDENT AGAIN IN GIVING THE ACCOUNT FURNISHED BY MISSIONARIES. DIE BURGER AND ARGUS CITED MIN DEF P.W. BOTH'S STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT EMPHASIZING SAG DETERMINATION TO PROTECT THE OVAMBO GOVERNMENT SO LONG AS SAG PRESENCE IS DESIRED. DUR BURGER DEPLORED THE FACT THAT MANY NAMIBIAN CHURCHMENT HAVE SUPPORTED SWAPO IN THE PAST. BOTHE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT THE ABDUCTION ILLUSTRATED SWAPO'S RESORT TO PURE TERRORISM RATHER THAN RISKING ENGAGEMENT WITH SAG FORCES. THE ACTION SHOWED THAT SWAPO HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE GENUINE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE, BOTHA NOTED. ADDING THAT FURTHER SIMILAR INCIDENTS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, ESPECIALLY IN INSTANCES WHERE MISSION STATIONS HAD NOT SOUGHT PROTECTION BY SAG FORCES. HE SAID SAG WAS PREPARED TO INCREASE ITS EFFORTS IF NECESSARY, BUT DECLINED TO MENTION SPECIFIC ACTIONS THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN. BOTHA ALSO DECLINED TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY THAT SAG FORCES MIGHT CROSS INTO ANGOLA TO RESCUE THE CHI\$43,, NOTING THAT HE IS AWAITING COMMENTS FROM ANGOLA BEFORE DECIDING ON NEXT STEPS.

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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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